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The Right to Work

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was due to its proponents in Congress and in the public at large.

Today FEPC faces its decisive battle, seeking through the Scanlon-Dawson-LaFollette bills to become a permanent part of the American legislative system. These bills (H.R. 3986, H.R. 4004, and H.R. 4005) are identical, and define the scope of fair employment more broadly —to include all employers and unions of more than five persons engaged in interstate commerce, to include all Government agencies, and all contractors and subcontractors of the Federal Government. A paid committee of seven men, to be appointed in a staggered yearly system, is provided for. The bills give FEPC the right to subpoena witnesses or records, and the power of enforcement through the district courts of the United States.

Opposition is based upon three major premises: (1) that the proposed bills violate the spirit of the Constitution since they would not allow the employer the right to choose his employees freely; (2) that Negroes are inferior, and these bills would open the way to a social leveling; and (3) that the secret intent is to override the state right of segregation.

The opposition went into action in the Philadelphia conflict. With utmost indifference to the critical needs of our armed forces, men violated the law, disrupted order, and sabotaged the only means of transportation to and from vital war plants. They have embarrassed the nation before the world in order that the "right to work" might not be enforced.

This is a critical moment, when the very existence of our nation could be seriously threatened by widespread action of this sort. What is to be expected when these patterns and this bias will be untempered by urgency?

Throughout the development of human rights in America, there has been a conflict. In the seventeenth century, the Massachusetts "theocratic" government regarded religious toleration as an infringement upon its rights—that it was the duty of good government to insist upon homogeneous religious practices within its borders. At the same time, four other colonies pioneered in religious tolerance, some from indifference, others from self-preservation of their own minor sects, and still others from the firm belief in the individual's "right of conscience."

Today, we must decide whether the right of any and all men to work and to seek work constitutes an infringement of the right of choice of the employer or labor union. We must examine the stratification which has created a

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